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FOCUS

The Democrats' Identity Crisis

As the '92 Presidential Campaign Nears, the Democrats Struggle to Find a New Message and Messenger

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Sixth National Policy Institute to Convene

Black political leaders have issued a call for a national conference of black elected officials to be held in Washington, D.C., next January—in advance of the presidential primaries. This Sixth National Policy Institute will be a nonpartisan educational forum for documenting major public policy issues of concern to black Americans.

The Institute will be convened by the Congressional Black Caucus, the six other national caucuses of black officials, and the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, which serves as Institute convener. The other sponsors are: the National Conference of Black Mayors, the National Association of Black County Officials, the Judicial Council, the National Black Caucus of State Legislators, the National Black Caucus of Local Elected Officials, and the National Association of Black School Board Members.

The Institute will help to establish policy priorities to be debated in the 1992 presidential race. It also will provide a unique opportunity for black elected officials from different political jurisdictions to meet and exchange views on subjects of mutual interest.

This forum was launched in 1967 when Dr. Kenneth B. Clark, the noted social psychologist, convened key black political leaders in Washington, D.C. They were convened again in 1969 in Chicago. The 1969 meeting documented the need for a regular national assembly of black elected officials, and also issued a national call for the creation of the Joint Center, which opened its doors in 1970.

The Joint Center convened the third national conference of black elected officials in 1978 and the fourth in 1984. The national caucuses of black officials and the Joint Center agreed in 1984 to cosponsor a national Institute every four years, to coincide with the presidential elections.

Following a tradition dating back to 1967, the Joint Center and the seven national organizations of black elected officials have developed the Sixth National Policy Institute as a forum that will be nonpartisan, national in scope, and comprehensive in its reach to all levels of governance. More important, it will combine the fruits of solid research with the practical realities of the political world to illuminate public debates on critical policy issues.

The 1992 meeting will be held at the Washington Hilton and Towers Hotel. We expect over 800 officials to participate in a comprehensive two-and-a-half-day program of workshops and forums on topics such as education, health care, the drug crisis, and minority business development.

The coming Institute takes on particular importance when one looks at the generally hollow political debates that up to now have purported to address substantive national problems. Scant attention has been paid by the Bush administration to marshalling the national will and providing the resources necessary to address the many domestic problems facing blacks and other Americans.

Nevertheless, somebody has to carry the moral compass. Black elected officials have a special heritage, grounded in doing what's right on behalf of those who have been locked out of the promises of American society. Fannie Lou Hamer, Harold Washington, and Mickey Leland didn't stop to put fingers to the wind whenever tough decisions had to be made. They didn't bend and shape their consciences to fit the political fashions of the day. They brought to bear the full power of their humanity, moral suasion, and belief in the rightness of their cause despite often overwhelming evidence that the odds were stacked heavily against them.

That's why we at the Joint Center strongly encourage black elected and appointed officials—as well as civic, fraternal, sororal, business, and labor leaders—to join us in Washington, D.C., for the Sixth National Policy Institute. Let our numbers send the clear message that we are unified and resolute in our commitment to public policies based on humane values. ■

PRESIDENT

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The Democrats' Identity Crisis

As the '92 Presidential Campaign Nears, the Democrats Struggle to Find a New Message and Messenger

by Michael K. Frisby

As the Democrats prepare for another presidential campaign, the once proud party of Franklin D. Roosevelt and John F. Kennedy again finds itself portrayed as the embattled underdog, struggling to patch up its splintered coalitions. The party has not found a potent campaign theme or crowned a new messenger who can challenge President George Bush. And once again, the Democrats, as if under an evil spell, have watched as opportunities have slipped away.

The fall of 1990 had been a moment in the sun for the Democrats as they held a lock on the powerful economic theme of tax fairness. The White House and congressional leaders had just negotiated a budget agreement that left the Republicans on the wrong side of the political divide. President Bush was forced to violate his campaign oath and agree to raise taxes, but he refused a Democratic push for a surtax on the rich. There was rumbling from middle-class voters across the nation who felt the Republicans had tightened the squeeze on their pocketbooks.

The Republicans were worried—after all, economic issues had propelled the Democratic party in its glory years, bridging divisions of race, class, and religion to forge a coalition that sought a redistribution of wealth. Bush was said to be vulnerable. In 1990 the Democrats were poised to return to the side of the middle-class, much of which had deserted the party in the 1980s.

Then it all vanished. The military success in the Persian Gulf War seized center stage, overshadowing all other issues. Bush was feted as a conqueror, restoring national pride, while strong Democratic opposition to the use of force reinforced the party's image of being weak on defense. And more recently, Bush has tightened his grip on national media attention with Secretary of State James Baker's shuttle diplomacy in the Middle East and by unveiling his surprise initiative to eliminate all short-range nuclear weapons. By many accounts, the Democrats have shrunk as a force in national elections over the last decade. They lost five of the last six presidential campaigns, three to electoral landslides and they will be the decided underdogs again in 1992. This is surely a bleak picture. But is it accurate?

Democrats Reign in Congress

Leading Democrats concede the obvious—they have lost their fastball in presidential politics as well as their footing on economic turf, which they once dominated. But party leaders emphasize that Democrats still dominate at all other levels of government, from county courthouses to state legislatures to Congress. "If you look at a party that has more elected officials at every level of government than any other party, that had a growing number of officials at every level, except the presidency, from 1980 to 1989—that is a strong party," argues Mark Steitz, Democratic National Committee (DNC) director of research.

Some figures support his claim. In the 1980s, the Republicans spent $1.2 billion in campaign dollars, but saw their party's representation drop—among U.S. senators from 53 to 43, among congressmen from 191 to 166, and among governors from 23 to 20. Their control of state legislatures dropped from 35 states to 23. Some counter that the Democrats are in trouble despite gains in Congress and statehouses because the presidency has so grown in stature and importance that the public seems to use it as the single gauge in assessing the two parties.

"In some ways, it is an example of how we shorthand everything into the presidency and how much we care about it and how much it symbolizes governing and politics," says Stephen Hess of the Brookings Institution. "Everybody is shaking their heads at the Democrats even though they control more state houses, city halls and congressional seats. We're not saying, 'the poor Republicans'." Milton Morris, vice president for research at the Joint Center, says that "while the Democratic party is functioning well at the local and grassroots levels, the national party remains in substantial disarray and in search of both leadership and a messenger, and I don't see it particularly close to finding either of those."

Blacks at Arms Length

Over the past decade, the Republicans managed to hold together a disparate coalition while the diverse Democratic constituencies have fragmented that party. As the Republicans have struck with one "wedge issue" after another—crime, "Willie Horton," quotas—the FDR coalition of unions, blacks, liberals and poor southern whites has splintered. As the Democrats tried to appease those groups during the 1980s, the Republicans successfully portrayed them as a party pandering to "special interests," speaking to a few Americans but not all.

"We have a problem, like Bush, with the vision thing," says Michael McCurry, a Washington-based Democratic strategist. "Until we really flush out what we believe as a

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Mr. Frisby covers politics and Congress for The Boston Globe.

Democrats

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party, we have the remnants of the FDR coalition and they are all deeply fearful of each other—you see it every day, blacks are fearful of Jews and vice-versa; unions are fearful of yuppie executives..."

In the last four years, the biggest strategic question was whether the party should openly court its black supporters. Michael Dukakis, the 1988 presidential nominee, did little to reach out to the black community. And a growing number of moderate and conservative Democrats argue that embracing blacks chases more whites from the party.

Harvey Gantt, the black Democratic Senate candidate who nearly upset Republican Jesse Helms in North Carolina last year, says, "If Democrats don't embrace a message saying they are an inclusive party, then they are going to be in trouble. To me it's a 'bury your head in the sand' strategy that simply says we will not appeal to the best interests of all Americans by talking about equality, opportunity and affirmative action."

Ronald Walters, chair of the political science department at Howard University, says the Democrats' taking the black vote for granted has caused a downward swing in black turnout in both 1984 and 1988 that has further jeopardized the party's chances of winning the presidency.

Tearing Left and Right

With the ideological splits growing deeper and poor showings in both the 1980 and 1984 presidential campaigns, the mid-1980s gave birth to a splinter group of Democrats who believed that the national party was cruising in the wrong direction. In 1985, a group of mainly white male Southern and Western elected officials formed the moderate-to-conservative Democratic Leadership Council (DLC).

More recently, the liberal Coalition for Democratic Values has emerged in part as a reaction to the DLC. While labor and women's groups and other elements of the Democratic coalition have continued to work with the traditional party hierarchy, the Democratic National Committee (DNC), these two splinter groups have organized outside of its structure. The DLC seeks to move the party to the right to conform to what it perceives as the ideological shift of the nation.

Initially, the DLC viewed the party as dominated by Northern liberals, and it often clashed with the DNC. But some of the DLC's attempts to be a political force have backfired. Hoping to give a white moderate or conservative Democrat a boost in the 1988 presidential primaries, the DLC pushed for Super Tuesday—holding many Southern primaries on one day—only to have the party's most liberal contender, Rev. Jesse L. Jackson, emerge as the region's big winner.

By contrast, the Coalition espouses liberal solutions to domestic problems. It advocates cutting the defense budget by 50 percent and allocating the revenues to human resources—health care, education, and job training. Heather Booth, the group's executive director, calls on her party to "make a resurgence for working people." But in its infant stage, the Coalition has not yet gained the impact of the DLC.

Alvin From, the DLC executive director, dismisses the notion that the DLC has divided the party. "The divisions in this party are longstanding and real; they've existed since 1972," says From. We lost 49 states in 1972; 44 states in 1980 and 49 states in 1984—before we had a DLC—which indicates the splits have been there."

Stephen Hess of the Brookings Institution agrees, suggesting that the Democratic party is so diverse that there have always been divisions, but that great leaders pulled them together. "Franklin Roosevelt could hold these people together and they were just as unholy an alliance; there wasn't much love lost between blacks and conservative whites. So skilled leadership can do a lot." But Hess maintains that it is difficult to display that leadership unless the Democrats occupy the White House and the forum it represents. And he says that such leadership cannot be effectively exerted by members of Congress, although some advocate a more aggressive stand by these legislators.

In Search of a Messenger

The cure for the party, say political analysts, is finding a strong messenger, someone with stature who can bring the public together in support of economic growth and tax fairness. There is polling evidence indicating that if the Democrats can find a presidential candidate who is respected enough to grab the public's attention, Bush may be vulnerable despite his effort to keep the nation focused on foreign affairs and nuclear disarmament rather than domestic concerns.

Several polls taken in August and September show that the public considers the economy and other domestic issues—such as education, health care, and the environment—to be more than twice as important as foreign policy, where Bush's reputation is strongest. According to a *Wall Street Journal*-NBC News poll, by a 42 to 21 percent margin the public has greater confidence in the Democrats' ability to handle domestic issues, and by a closer margin (28 to 25 percent) the Democrats are seen as being better at handling the economy.

Alvin From and others believe that a host of new initiatives pursued at the local level by Democrats can prove to the country that the party has a platform worth supporting—if they can get a forum to present their ideas. He advocates this new style of politics that, he says, seeks to advance ideas which appeal to a broad number of Americans, rather than following the old path of delivering different messages to different segments of the coalition. For example, he believes that economically deprived blacks and whites would embrace an industrial apprentice program that would train young people entering the work force, benefitting new workers from both races and diminishing racial competition.

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POLITICAL TRENDLETTER®

Inside This Issue

- A Labor Department report provides new proof that discrimination bars women and minorities from top management positions in U.S.corporations.
- Four U.S. senators who relied on black voters in the '86 campaign are up for reelection next year.
- Across the Nation: Rep. William Clay helps his son in state legislative race, Betty Barnette becomes Albany's treasurer, Pattie Harrison is appointed judge in North Carolina, and Sylvester Turner will run for mayor of Houston.

Glass Ceiling in Corporate America

Contrary to what has been the Reagan-Bush dogma over the last decade, Labor Secretary **LYNN MARTIN** has discovered that discrimination can be directed at groups as well as individuals. According to its "Report on the Glass Ceiling Initiative," released in August, the Labor Department has determined that there are "artificial barriers based on attitudinal or organizational bias that prevent qualified minorities and women from advancing into mid- and senior-level management positions." The Labor Department's Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) enforces Executive Order 11246, which requires firms receiving federal contracts to provide equal opportunity in employment through affirmative action. Companies found not to be complying with the Executive Order can be barred from any future contracts; however, this sanction has rarely been used. While officials of both the Reagan and Bush administrations have long argued that job bias only occurs against individuals, one-by-one, the "Glass Ceiling" now joins a long list of studies which show that minorities and women, as groups, are also victims of institutionalized employment discrimination.

Launched in 1990 under the leadership of then-Secretary **ELIZABETH DOLE**, the Labor Department study was undertaken to determine whether a glass ceiling existed and, if so, what could be done about it. The final report is based on discussions with representatives from business, labor, women's, and civil rights groups as well as the Department's independent evaluations of nine unnamed Fortune 500 companies that do business with the federal government. These companies represent a range of industries and have from 8,000 to 300,000 employees.

Secretary Martin argues that the project was especially necessary in light of the changing demographics of the work force. Population trends indicate that by the year 2000, women, minorities, and immigrants will represent about 85 percent of those entering the labor market in the United States. At an August press conference announcing the findings, Martin said, "If our end game is to compete successfully in today's global market, then we have to unleash the full potential of the American work force. The time has come to tear down, to dismantle, to remove and to shatter the 'glass ceiling'." The following are highlights of the Glass Ceiling report:

- Each of the nine companies reviewed had a level beyond which minorities and women had never advanced. This ceiling exists at a much lower management level than was generally expected, and minorities plateau at lower levels of the work force than women.
- Companies often stereotype individuals, locking them in positions that are not in line for further advancement; minorities and women tend to be locked into human resources, public relations, research and administration and kept out of sales and production, areas considered to be the fast track to the executive suite.
- Emphasis on company seniority has worked against women and minorities. Corporations usually promote from within, considering employees who have 20- plus years of company experience for senior management. Most corporations only began hiring women and minorities in professional positions within the past 20 years.
- Personnel directors and equal employment opportunity officers are usually not involved in recruitment for management positions at the senior level.
- Executive recruitment practices—like employee referral, use of search firms, and word-of-mouth networking—

are not monitored to ensure that a diverse pool of applicants is considered.

- Senior managers usually identify key employees for management positions well in advance of their promotions. They then monitor their careers and give them special access to developmental and credential-enhancing opportunities that may speed their progress up the executive ladder, (such as appointment to special projects, job rotations, foreign assignments, training programs, and advanced education opportunities). Access to such opportunities are seldom afforded to women and minorities.

In order to act on the report's findings, the Labor Department will promote a diverse work force by giving public recognition to companies with effective and creative programs for assuring equal opportunity. It will also continue compliance reviews of corporate federal contractors.

Deep South Senate Races in '92

In 1986, four Southern Democrats won election to the U.S. Senate largely thanks to black voters in their states: North Carolina's **TERRY SANFORD**, Georgia's **WYCHE FOWLER**, Louisiana's **JOHN BREAUX**, and Alabama's **RICHARD SHELBY**. Each received at least 80 percent of the black vote, edging out his opponent by less than six percentage points. Once elected, each voted against the confirmation of **ROBERT BORK** for the U.S. Supreme Court, and each voted in favor of the Civil Rights Act of 1990. However, other legislative actions to support black interests have varied among them. All four are up for reelection in '92 and all are expected to be returned to Washington by the voters, though Fowler and Sanford may face tight races.

TERRY SANFORD (North Carolina). Except for his vote against the Persian Gulf War, North Carolina's junior senator did not ignite any controversy during his freshman term. **HAROLD WEBB**, Raleigh coordinator of **HARVEY GANTT**'s campaign for the senate last year, says Sanford's strong ties to the black community date back to his term as governor (1961 to 1965). **WILLIAM CHAFE**, a historian at Duke University, says Sanford was the first governor in the state (and the South) to "willingly endorse the principles of the civil rights movement."

In 1986, Sanford, who is also a former state representative and former president of Duke University, had to face four primary candidates to win his party's nomination. In the general election he defeated Republican former congressman **JAMES T. BROYHILL** by four percent of the vote to succeed Republican **JOHN EAST** (who had announced his retirement but committed suicide before his term was up). In next year's election, state Democratic officials say Sanford will be the party's uncontested nominee. However, his age (74) and minimal fundraising (he reportedly had raised less than $100,000 as of August) have sparked speculation that he might not seek reelection. Most of the state's pundits scoff at that suggestion; but should Sanford opt not to seek reelection, former Charlotte mayor and 1990 senate candidate Harvey Gantt has been mentioned as a possible Democratic contender. Gantt, who is black, lost by only six percentage points in a hotly contested Senate race last year against ultra-conservative Republican **JESSE HELMS**. If Sanford were to step aside, many political observers in the state believe Gantt could pull off a victory.

Sanford's announced Republican opponents are former state commerce secretary (and former Democrat) **McLAUCHLIN "LAUCH" FAIRCLOTH** and Charlotte mayor **SUE MYRICK**. Faircloth is backed by Helms' political organization, the National Congressional Club, and by the state's Republican governor **JAMES G. MARTIN**. Myrick, who defeated Gantt in his reelection bid in 1987, is a former city council member now serving her second term as mayor of the state's largest city. Other possible GOP contenders are former congressmen **BILL COBEY** and **WALTER EUGENE JOHNSTON**, who each served one term in Congress during the 1980s.

WYCHE FOWLER (Georgia). Georgia Republicans are eager to regain the seat they lost in 1986 when Fowler beat Senator **MACK MATTINGLY** by just two percent of the vote. A moderate Democrat who as a congressman had represented Georgia's majority-black 5th District, which encompasses Atlanta, for 10 years, Fowler was at first considered too liberal to represent the state in '86. He had to fight off three primary competitors for his party's nod. This time around, Fowler seems to be clear of same-party opposition, but Republicans are lining up to challenge him. The only announced candidate is former U.S. Attorney **ROBERT BARR**, a newcomer to electoral politics not well known beyond north Georgia. Mattingly is rumored to be considering a comeback, but local insiders, who say he had little impact as a senator, count his chances as slim. Former state senator **PAUL COVERDELL**, who recently resigned as director of the Peace Corps, is pondering a bid and is expected to be Fowler's toughest foe because of his extensive political experience. A Bush appointee to the Peace Corps in 1989, he had represented an affluent white suburban Atlanta district in the state senate for 20 years, 15 of them as minority leader. Coverdell has also chaired the state party and the Southern steering committee of President Bush's 1988 campaign.

Fowler, 51, will be tough to beat. He made his presence felt among Georgia voters during his first term, traveling to the state several times each month. The black community is Fowler's strongest base. He has convened a hearing at Spelman College on the needs of historically black institutions; introduced legislation to increase funding for the Martin Luther King, Jr., Historic Site in Atlanta; and sponsored the Minority Farmers' Rights Act to help preserve minority-owned farms and provide them with technical assistance. He has also worked to increase federal research funding for the state's traditionally black institutions of higher education.According to **ALAN WEST** of the Georgia Farm Bureau, Fowler has won over the state's powerful agricultural community. He sits on the Senate Agriculture Committee and kept a high profile during the 1990 reauthorization of the Farm Bill, working with the other members of the state's congressional delegation to maintain peanut price supports—very important to the state that grows 50 percent of the nation's peanuts.

Fowler's fundraising abilities and his rise as a force in the Senate will also prove to be assets at election time. He has amassed a one-million-dollar war chest and has landed several plum Senate assignments, including assistant deputy whip for the Southern region and assistant floor leader. In addition, he sits on the Democratic Steering Committee, which makes Senate committee assignments.

JOHN BREAUX (Louisiana). Louisiana's Breaux and Alabama's Shelby are expected to win reelection more easily than their colleagues in North Carolina and Georgia. Breaux, a 48-year-old attorney, served seven terms in the U.S. House of Representatives prior to his Senate victory. In 1986, he defeated Republican congressman W. **HENSON MOORE** by six percent to succeed retiring Democratic senator **RUSSELL B. LONG**, son of the state's legendary political boss **HUEY LONG**. The state GOP inadvertently contributed to Breaux's 1986 Senate victory when its efforts to purge voter rolls in black precincts became public. The backlash from that episode gave Breaux the overwhelming support of black voters. At present, he has no announced opposition for the October 19, 1992, open primary and there is a good chance he will remain unopposed.

During his days in the House of Representatives he voted with the "Boll Weevils," a coalition of conservative Southern Democrats who supported Reaganomics. He currently chairs the conservative Democratic Leadership Council, a group that has been slow to embrace initiatives advocated by black political leaders. Nevertheless, Breaux voted in 1988 for the Civil Rights Restoration Act, which overturned a Supreme Court ruling that limited the reach of four civil rights laws. He also supported increased funding for historically black colleges and voted for the Hate Crimes Statistics Bill.

Local observers expect his reelection to come easily. Breaux has been skillful at balancing the environmental and industrial concerns of the state, which has, on the one hand, a large fishing and game industry and an active conservationist lobby and, on the other, a powerful oil industry. He sits on the Finance and the Commerce, and Science and Transportation committees. In 1989, his party elected him to a term as chair of one of its fundraising arms, the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee.

RICHARD SHELBY (Alabama). A former state senator and four-term member of the U.S. House of Representatives, Democrat Shelby defeated Republican incumbent **JEREMIAH DENTON** in 1986 by fewer than 7,000 votes. Alabama's junior senator was also a Boll Weevil while in the House, tending to vote with the Republicans—pro-business, pro-defense, and conservative on economic and social issues. In 1987 he was rated second only to Alabama's senior senator **HOWELL HEFLIN** among all senate Democrats who voted in support of President Reagan's initiatives. Despite his 1982 vote in the U.S. House against extension of the Voting Rights Act and his opposition to the Martin Luther King Holiday, Shelby garnered 88 percent of the black vote in 1986. When compared to the ultra-conservative Denton, he was considered the lesser of two evils.

According to black state senator **MICHAEL FIGURES**, a Democrat from Mobile, Shelby is still regarded with suspicion by the black community. "He has no track record of taking interest in black issues; no one is excited about his performance," says Figures. This view is echoed by another black Democratic state senator, HANK SANDERS, who represents part of Shelby's former Congressional district in Selma. Says Sanders, "He voted against African Americans as a congressman on economic and civil rights issues and he has done the same on international issues, concerning policies relating to Angola and South Africa."

Although some black voters are unhappy with Shelby's record, their choices for '92 are limited. With an estimated $1.8 million in his campaign coffers, Shelby is the most financially secure of the four senators and he is not expected to face any Democratic opposition. Only one Republican contender, Montgomery business consultant **RICHARD SELLERS**, has plans to challenge him. Sellers, who has never held elective office, is virtually unknown outside Montgomery. At this point, no other Republican challengers have surfaced and Shelby is expected to return to Washington without a scratch.

Across the Nation

MISSOURI: On September 3 **WILLIAM CLAY, JR.,** 35-year-old son of veteran St. Louis Democratic congressman **WILLIAM CLAY, SR.**, was elected to fill the unexpired term of black state senator **JOHN BASS** who represented the 4th Senatorial District. The 4th district encompasses Northeast St. Louis. Bass stepped down in June after 10 years in the state legislature to accept a congressional staff position in Washington. He was appointed staff director of the House Administration Subcommittee on Libraries and Memorials, which Congressman Clay chairs. Some political observers see Clay's offer of the post to Bass as a maneuver to open the state senate seat for Clay Jr., who they believe is being groomed to succeed his father in Congress. Congressman Clay, 60, has served 22 years in the House of Representatives.

The younger Clay defeated white Republican **GRETCHEN L. LIFF** by more than 2,000 votes to gain the senate seat. Before this recent victory, he had served in the state house of representatives for eight years, where he chaired the Joint Committee for Public Employee Retirement and the Black Legislative Caucus. He was a delegate to the 1988 Democratic National Convention and headed the 1988 Missouri Jesse Jackson for President Campaign. Bass, 64, is a former principal and school administrator. Prior to his election to the state senate, he had served as St. Louis comptroller, social service director and alderman.

NEW YORK: BETTY J. BARNETTE, executive director of the Arbor Hill Community Center in Albany, made history when she was sworn in as city treasurer of Albany on August 19. Appointed by Mayor **THOMAS M. WHALEN III** to fill the vacancy left by the retiring incumbent, Barnette is the first black person to hold the position. To retain the position, she will have to stand for election in November, but so far no challengers have emerged and she carries the support of the mayor and the Democratic party. If she is victorious in November, Barnette will be the first black and the first woman elected to a post at Albany's city hall.

NORTH CAROLINA: PATTIE S. HARRISON, 45, a black former assistant district attorney, was sworn in as district court judge for the 9th Judicial District of North Carolina in July. The district covers the northeastern region of the state including the towns of Henderson, Roxboro, and Oxford. Harrison had served as assistant district attorney for the 9th District since 1985. She was appointed court judge by the state's Republican governor **JAMES MARTIN** to fill the unexpired term of black judge **FLOYD B. McKISSICK**, who died in April.

McKissick, a noted civil rights activist, was counsel and national director of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) during the '60s. He persuaded the Nixon administration to support the establishment of an all- black "new-town"—Soul City, North Carolina—as a symbol of black economic empowerment. McKissick became the district's first black judge last year on appointment by Martin, and Harrison is now the district's first female judge. To keep the post she will have to run for reelection in 1992. A former high school and special education teacher, Harrison received a law degree from North Carolina Central University in 1983.

TEXAS: If 36-year-old black state representative **SYLVESTER TURNER** were a betting man, the odds would encourage him to put his money on Houston Mayor **KATHY WHITMIRE**, who has won seven consecutive bids for office since 1977—two for city comptroller and five for mayor. But Turner isn't betting on the odds. Instead, the Harvard Law School graduate is hoping to defy them with his own mayoral bid in the November 5 nonpartisan election. **ROBERT LANIER**, 65, a wealthy white businessman and former head of the city's transportation system, is also challenging Whitmire.

A Houston native, Turner is a two-term state representative and the first black person elected to represent Houston's predominantly white and affluent 139th district. According to Rice University political science professor **ROBERT STEIN**, Turner appeals to blacks and affluent whites, but Lanier's August entrance into the campaign is expected to peel away some of Turner's white support and, Stein says, he may not be able to galvanize a large enough share of the black vote to be victorious.

Whitmire has proven to be tough to beat, capturing at least 58 percent of the vote in her past reelection bids. Each time, the black community has voted heavily in her favor (more than 75 percent) according to political analyst **FRANKLIN D. JONES** of historically black Texas Southern University, located in Houston. Jones attributes Whitmire's support among blacks to her cultivation of black community groups over the years and her appointment of blacks to key positions in city government—such as police commissioner and health director.

Whitmire has competed against one other black candidate in her mayoral bids, Houston Justice of the Peace **ALEXANDER GREEN**, who along with 14 other candidates (including Whitmire) challenged incumbent mayor **JIM McCONN** in 1981. As mayor, Whitmire hasn't committed any major blunders or alienated any significant voting blocs, and she has assembled a well-oiled political machine that has already defeated two former mayors—in 1985 and 1989.

Diversity and American Competitiveness

If the U.S. Is to Retain Its Position as the World's Economic Leader, It Must Continue Progress in Mainstreaming Minorities in the Workplace

by Vernon E. Jordan, Jr.

The following article is adapted from a speech Mr. Jordan delivered to a group of business executives at Bohemian Grove in Monte Rio, California, on July 19, 1991.

Today, America finds itself at a unique moment in history. We stand as the world's foremost economic power. Despite all the stories of decline, we produce more than Japan, consume more than Europe, and remain the most productive, richest nation in the world. Yet maintaining economic preeminence in this changing world will depend upon America's capacity for renewal and upon our ability to finally come to terms with the racial problems that have plagued us throughout our history.

The *Workforce 2000* report by the Hudson Institute says 85 percent of new work force entrants in this decade will be racial minorities, immigrants, and women. This new diversity affects the political and economic life of America. For the nation to maintain its world leadership position it must do what the armed forces appear to have done to a greater degree than any other institutions in our society—to draw on all of our society's human resources, enable all of our people to become productive contributors, value diversity, and combat discrimination. America is still very far from demonstrating its ability to do that.

Unfortunately, we are not moving forward to resolve our historic racial problems. Instead, we are literally moving backward—rehashing issues we thought were settled, such as affirmative action, and politicizing racial issues to fan white resentments. We want to think of ourselves as a color-blind society, but racial stereotyping is pervasive and race remains a central factor in the life of the nation.

The struggles over the Civil Rights Acts of 1990 and 1991 illustrate that. President Bush has a record of support for civil rights, but he became the first president in modern times to successfully veto a civil rights bill. Instead of being consistent with his past and with the principle of equal opportunity, the president listened to his close advisors and the cynical political consultants who saw another Willie Horton-style vote-getting issue. The White House focus has been on what will play at the polls, not on what is good for the country.

Business's Stake in Civil Rights

The business community has a lot at stake in resolving this issue. That's why the Business Roundtable leadership took part in negotiations with civil rights leaders to try to work out a compromise civil rights bill the president could accept. Those efforts ran into a stone wall when top White House officials coerced these business representatives to break off the talks.

The business community should have been up in arms, defending its right to participate in the Democratic process. It should have protested the ruthless attempt of the White House staff to run a bulldozer over its representatives. Instead, much of the business community was silent. I understand the concerns expressed by business executives regarding portions of the bill. But none of those concerns touched matters of principle, and all of them could have been negotiated given a White House amenable to compromise.

The Civil Rights Act is something business should support for its own long-term interest. First, because it essentially restores laws it has lived with and benefitted from. Second, because it advances equal opportunities for a diverse work force and it is in business's interest to secure that work force. Third, because strong anti-discrimination laws eliminate free riders. They force everybody to act right, and punish only those who don't. Fourth, because anything that draws minorities and women into the mainstream and ends discriminatory practices is better for America and therefore better for business. Finally, I believe business should support the civil rights bill as a moral imperative.

Deeply Embedded Inequities

The struggle over the Civil Rights Act and the controversies over affirmative action illustrate the change in the civil rights effort since the 1960s, when we as a nation were concerned with relatively simple issues—colored water fountains, the back of the bus, legally segregated schools, the right to vote. On those issues, blacks and whites alike marched around the walls of Jericho, blew their trumpets of righteousness, and the walls came tumbling down.

Those victories took energy, imagination, creativity, sore feet, pained ankles, blood, sweat, tears, and death. They were victories that made America feel good about itself, victories that opened new horizons for black people, victories that liberated white people, as well. Those victories were consistent with the moral principles central to the American experience and ideals.

Mr. Jordan is senior partner of Akin, Gump, Hauer, & Feld and is member of the Joint Center's board of governors.

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Diversity

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But the debris from those crumbling walls is still with us. The debris confuses and confounds a nation that fought the good fight and thought its victories would inaugurate a new era of racial harmony. It did not, in part because discrimination does not disappear when you pass a civil rights law. When we removed the top layer of easily recognizable evil, we revealed other layers of deeply embedded inequities that have become compounded by changes in other areas of the economy and the society. So despite the marked and very visible gains made by black people, we have a long, rugged road yet to travel.

Oddly enough, it was President Lyndon Johnson, who passed the civil rights laws and launched the War on Poverty, who best understood the difficulty of overcoming racial disadvantage. "To be bla k in white society," said Johnson, "is not to stand on level and equal ground. While the races may stand side by side, whites stand on history's mountain and blacks stand in history's hollow. Until we overcome unequal history, we cannot overcome unequal opportunity."

Overcoming unequal history suggests institutional action—government—to intervene with economic, educational, and social programs that create opportunities; and by the private sector—through enlightened, corporate social responsibility, self-interested affirmative action, and community programs that give disadvantaged minorities a stake in the system.

Buzzword Solutions

Unfortunately, today's prevailing orthodoxy is different. It says that anyone can get ahead in our colorblind society —all it takes is self-reliance and individual initiative. The problems we're facing today cannot be solved by buzzwords—those partial truths that obscure, rather than clarify, problems and their solutions. Self-reliance and individual responsibility are not the sole solutions to issues of welfare, unemployment, teenage pregnancy, hunger, homelessness, poor children, schools that do not teach and children that cannot read. Nor are lectures on self-reliance substitutes for food, shelter, health insurance, or quality education.

I find it condescending and insulting that blacks are singled out for such lectures. The position of blacks in our society was never determined by our own individual efforts, but by institutional discrimination that denied opportunities in the past and that continues to deny them in the present. Concepts like self-reliance were not discovered by conservative critics—they have been believed in and practiced by generation after generation of black people who relied on their own wits and work and wisdom to survive slavery, peonage, oppression, and injustice.

Many people suffer disadvantage today not because they lack values, but because our society refuses to implement enabling policies that can open doors of opportunity. Self-reliance and individual initiative are necessary but not sufficient to help end poverty and disadvantage. It is unseemly that those values are hawked the loudest by those who have benefited most from governmental interventions that created today's middle class. I am reminded of a West Coast flight from New York during my Urban League days. My seat mate was a successful white businessman, who, after his first martini, advised me that black people had to pull themselves up by their bootstraps. After his third martini, I asked him a few questions.

"Where did you attend college?" An Eastern private school on the *GI Bill*.

"What is your business and how did you get started?" Construction—*SBA loan*.

"Where do you live and how did you get your house?" Scarsdale—*FHA loan*.

So much for lifting yourself up by your bootstraps.

Which Side Are We On?

Those of us who sit in seats of corporate power, and who have influence in the economic and political affairs of our nation, have to help it change. Our personal fates, our companies' profits, our nation's future, depend on America changing. For every child that grows up hungry or homeless, every child that grows up uneducated, every young adult denied training and job opportunities, represents precious human resources America cannot afford to lose. America has repeatedly proven itself the land of freedom and opportunity. Our free enterprise system has repeatedly proven itself a system that delivers prosperity and opportunity.

But neither America nor the free enterprise system is finished. Rather, they are evolving to become more inclusive, more effective, more positive, more competitive forces in the world. It is our role to help speed that evolution along, to bring the promise of freedom and justice and prosperity to all Americans. For America has never developed on a straight, upward trajectory. It has always moved ahead, slipped backward, and moved on again. It is up to us to smooth the path ahead and to help America move forward faster. Our competitors are moving and they will not wait for us to straighten out our schools or to train the untrained or to draw the people on the margins into the mainstream.

A friend told me a story about his son who went to bed but could not sleep and so padded down to the den where his parents were watching George Stevens Jr.'s television drama, *Separate But Equal*, the story of Thurgood Marshall and the legal challenge to segregated schools. When the documentary ended, my friend sent the boy off to bed and the youngster slowly moved toward the door, rubbing his eyes. Then he turned and said to his father:

"Daddy, which side were you on?"

Some day in the future, there will be a documentary about the 1990s, and how America confronted the challenge of continuing racial inequality. What will our answer be when our grandchildren ask, "Which side were you on?" ■

Crown Heights: Dreadlocks and Yarmulkes

A Black Youth Reflects on the Clash Between Blacks and Jews in Brooklyn and the Cultural Estrangement That Divides His Neighborhood

by John L. Jackson

Editor's note: *On August 19, a vehicle driven by a member of a Hasidic Jewish sect ran a red light and struck and killed a seven-year-old black boy in the Crown Heights section of Brooklyn. The incident sparked several days of local rioting and exchanges of recriminations between Hasidic Jews and blacks, many of whom are from the West Indies. Amid the turmoil, a male Hasidic student from Australia was stabbed to death, apparently in retaliation.*

As representatives of America's black and Jewish communities engage in a dialogue to understand the underlying causes of the confrontation, many are concerned that Crown Heights is symptomatic of broader tensions running between two groups that for decades have been allies. But to what extent can we generalize from this tragic incident to the broader state of relations between blacks and Jews? And what might we learn from the incident that can help to prevent such tragedies and improve relationships, not only between blacks and Jews, but among the many diverse groups that make up our society?

Crown Heights is an unusual community. The majority of the black population is of West Indian background, and the Hasidic Jews involved are a small group with unique religious practices and beliefs. The article that follows is by a black youth who grew up in Crown Heights and views what happened there as less a case of racial friction and more a conflict of cultures.

Just as important as the conflict itself were the responses to it. Prominent in the press coverage of the incident were a few visible personalities who responded by encouraging anti-Jewish sentiment among the already angry black residents. What was not widely reported were the efforts of an array of black community leaders and public officials who worked diligently and effectively to restore calm and begin a healing process.

I was born in Brooklyn and have lived in or around Crown Heights for all my 20 years. That isn't true of my parents and many of the other blacks living in Crown Heights who were born and grew up in the West Indies. For as long as I can remember, Hasidic Jews have lived among us in this tree-lined section of Brooklyn with its well-kept row houses. We are neighbors who rarely speak to each other. The courtesies and greetings shared by neighbors in other communities are not observed here—no "Good morning" or "How have you been?" pass between us. Contact between the two groups is typified by a black patron at a Jewish-owned candy store saying, "Lemme get a bag of chips," and a remote "What else?" in response from the shopkeeper.

The lines of non-interaction are strictly drawn. The two groups walk up and down the same sidewalks every day—male Hasidim in their yarmulkes, black three-piece suits, long black beards and side locks, the West Indians in their jeans, basketball shoes, and dreadlocks or hightop fades—exchanging only a passing half-smile or a cool glance. A palpable tension was always present though hidden beneath a cloak of indifference. Squeezed into the same geographical location, we have always been worlds apart, with neither side attempting to visit the other's world.

This mutually exclusive coexistence was a time bomb. On August 19, 1991, the bomb exploded when a clash between blacks and Jews rocked the neighborhood and the nation. The confrontation was ignited by the death of a seven-year-old boy from a West Indian family who was killed when a station wagon that was part of a three-car caravan carrying Rabbi Menachem Schneerson, grand rebbe of the Lubavitcher Hasidic sect, drove through a red light and plowed into the child on his bike. The incident led to three days of bottle-throwing riots and demonstrations in the neighborhood and the retaliatory stabbing death of a 29-year-old Hasidic student from Australia.

The sensationalized headlines proclaiming "racial violence" got it wrong. This was not just a case of blacks vs. whites. The confrontation could more accurately be characterized as a conflict in cultures. Many West Indians grow up seeing two very different cultures existing side-by-side, harboring an unspoken intolerance of their differences. The blacks in Crown Heights listen to calypso or soka music, eat roti and curried chicken, and speak with heavy Caribbean accents that sound like foreign languages to anyone (black or white) unfamiliar with the dialect. By contrast, the Hasidic Jews never seem to listen to music and walk to temple every Saturday (the Jewish Sabbath).

At about six or seven years old, I remember asking my mother where "those people" came from. I knew where she was from, a small island called Antigua in the middle of the Caribbean; I'd even been there, but hadn't seen any of "those people" in her homeland. Why? My mother didn't have any answers for me. Like most of her generation of West Indian immigrants to America, my mother, now in her 40s, arrived when she was a teenager. She told me there weren't as many Jewish people around when she first came to the neighborhood.

When I was older, about 15 or 16, I sought the answers

Mr. Jackson, a recent intern at the Joint Center, is a junior at Howard University in Washington, D.C.

Democrats

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But party insiders now ask: if the Democrats do develop a strong message, who will be their messenger? The current field of Democratic presidential aspirants consists of relative unknowns: former Massachusetts senator Paul Tsongas, senators Bob Kerrey of Nebraska and Tom Harkin of Iowa, governors L. Douglas Wilder of Virginia and Bill Clinton of Arkansas, and former California governor Jerry Brown. So far, no big-name Democrat has emerged as a candidate to command national attention.

Democratic strategist Michael McCurry asserts that ever since Jerry Brown first entered the presidential arena in 1976, a succession of candidates have promoted new ways for the party to address national problems, but failed badly—former Colorado senator Gary Hart with his "New Generation" in 1984, former Arizona governor Bruce Babbitt with a populist message in 1988. Kerrey and Clinton, he says, may try it in next year's campaign. But McCurry concedes, "it is tough to introduce a new message with a new messenger."

Nevertheless, the party's messenger in 1992 will benefit from a refitted DNC. Democratic National Committee Chairman Ronald Brown has taken steps to turn the committee into a strategy and mechanics center, one that will allow the party's nominee to get a fast start in the general election after the convention next July.

"Organizationally, I don't think the Democratic party has ever been stronger," says Richard Callow, a Washington-based Democratic strategist. "But organization doesn't win the presidency. The Democratic party is the party of 1,000 factions, and the national tendency is for voters to look at some of the factions and say, 'that can't be me'...people want a party that represents them." By contrast, the Republican party, Callow says, has managed to capture the allegiance of American voters by standing for very little. ■

Crown Heights

(Continued from page 7)

to my questions about the people in the black three-piece suits from Oscar. He was two years my senior and, I believed, a few marbles wiser, too. He wasn't a "Yankee" like me but had been born "back home," in Trinidad. Oscar viewed Brooklyn as someone who had seen another world and could compare the two. He lectured, and I, the ignorant Yankee, listened to his orations on the Jews in Crown Heights.

"Dey come in heah," he'd say, "an' ignore we. Dey sell to us in de stores; dey'll make a dollah off we, but dey won't take a second in de street to say nottin' to nobody. Money go from black hand to white hand because dem and the Chinese own most de stores. See, but it is different with the Jews dem. Dey live wit we, an' hardly a nickel pass from dey hand to we own. We lettin' dem take all we moneys, and soon dey gonna buy up alla Crown Heights. And we just stand 'round lettin' it happen."

I haven't seen Oscar for years now but, since the August flare-up, the resentment he expressed in our talks has found new angry voices in black people shouting "No Justice, No Peace!" Walking around the neighborhood in August, I had heard not only the cries of anger and resentment from West Indians directed against Hasidim, but an equally loud outcry from the Hasidic community. Members of the latter community felt they had been good neighbors, and they countered West Indian protests against them with charges of "anti-Semitism." Now West Indian bitterness, always in the back of the community's collective mind, and the pent-up contempt of the Hasidim for the West Indians have become a volatile mixture that has moved to the forefront of everyone's lives. As Crown Heights recedes from the national headlines, the wounds of August will remain open in my neighborhood, and it will take a long time for them to heal. ■

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